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ABSTRACT

This document, written for counselors and educators, describes a computer-assisted program for career counselors. The ten tasks of a counselor-client goal setting process formulated by Philip Patsula and incorporated into this program are presented. The areas of experiencing a positive atmosphere, elaborating on constraints, and evaluating employability strengths are discussed. Field testing of the program throughout Canada is briefly discussed. Two videotape demonstrations of the ten tasks which were developed to complement the computer program are described. A micro-counseling training approach used to present the program is outlined. This document focuses on the computer program designed to outline the tasks and skills needed by the counselor in setting counseling goals and in moving toward action plans. The first part of the introduction from the one-hour computer program and a section from the middle of the program dealing with specific counselor skills are appended. (NRB)

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USING COMPUTERS IN COUNSELOR TRAINING

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USING COMPUTERS IN COUNSELOR TRAINING

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At the National Consultation on Vocational Counselling in January, 1982, Philip Patsula, from the University of Ottawa, talked about the research done in the development of the assessment component of employment counselling, a goal-setting model for employment counselling. He then incorporated a needs-identification system into a ten-task structure for goal-setting.

These tasks were described in detail in Patsula's Assessment Component of Employment Counselling and by Stuart Conger in NATCON 3 in an article entitled "The Ten Tasks of the Assessment Component of Employment Counselling (ACEC) - A Goal-Setting Process." These tasks were described by Conger as follows (NATCON 3, pp. 31-32):

1. Experience a positive atmosphere in which the counsellor is perceived as willing to be of assistance in a partnership manner.
2. State employment-related concerns and select one concern on which to work.
3. Elaborate the concern into terms which not only include what cannot be done but, also, why it cannot be done (constraint).
4. Obtain clarity as to the purpose of the interview. Arrive at sufficient consistency between own expectations and the expectations of the counsellor concerning the purpose, in order to be able to commit efforts to the stated purpose of the interview, i.e., arriving at a mutually agreed upon counsellor goal or action plan.
5. Obtain greater clarity as to the actual constraint and personal response of the constraint.
6. Evaluate employability strengths and barriers in relation to the constraint.
7. Examine possible unspoken assumptions which colour the constraint; replace unwanted assumptions and revise view of employability concern and constraint.

8. List ways of overcoming barriers and using strengths in overcoming employment constraint; select probable resolution of constraint.
9. Evaluate the selected resolution in the light of: employment/employability strengths and barriers; values; outside factor, e.g., services available, labour market conditions; and commitment.
10. State a specific counselling goal or action plan dealing with a relevant employment concern. Dealt with within the goal are initial steps to be taken, to which the client is committed.

This program has been field tested throughout Canada by Phil Patsula, Jim Boyle, and other in-service leaders. They have used a two-week training model. In January, 1984 I was asked to use a different format for teaching Module One (A.C.E.C.) and Module Two (Strategy Implementation). Rather than using the old format of giving employment counsellors many hours to read the textbooks beforehand, we experimented with teaching Module One in seven days and Module Two in the next seven days. Since no reading of materials had been done, we had to spend more time on actually teaching the content of Patsula's Assessment Component of Employment Counselling.

We decided that by using computer-assisted learning we could more quickly cover the over 600 pages of material presented in Assessment Component of Employment Counselling. In the one-hour program we developed, we attempted to outline the tasks and skills of A.C.E.C. The first few minutes of this computer program are presented in Appendix A.

In order to make this one-hour computer program more meaningful, we decided to provide videotape demonstrations of the ten tasks as well. We felt that employment counsellors would then be in a better position to practise skills such as empathy, paraphrasing, reflection of feeling, encouragement, confrontation, immediacy, and so forth. Two video tapes were produced at the University of Manitoba:

1. A.C.E.C. Program One (36 minutes)
Counselling a good worker who has been laid off after 15 years of manual labour with a meat-processing plant.
2. A.C.E.C. Program Two (17 minutes)
Counselling a worker who has had little difficulty getting jobs, but who has had no success in keeping jobs.

When this program was field-tested in Vancouver with 15 employment counsellors in January, 1984, a micro-counselling training approach was used. Briefly, the format was as follows:

1. a short lecture where we introduced the counselling task or skills;
2. an opportunity for discussion, tapes, computer review and paper-pencil exercises dealing with a single skill;
3. a demonstration of the skill;
4. practising of the skill;
5. feedback, individual and group; and
6. additional practice.

Employment counsellors could quickly review their knowledge of any task by working at one of the three computer terminals and reviewing the relevant descriptive materials. To test their knowledge, a multiple choice testing format was also used. If participants could not get the answer to a question, the relevant reading material was activated and the participant could immediately review unfamiliar material from A.C.E.C.

Employment counsellors also found it helpful to review the ten tasks on the computer just prior to role playing a goal-setting interview. They would then have in mind the major phases of the session; namely, the relationship, the concern, the employment constraints, the contingency and the employment counselling goal.

Not only did we emphasize the ten tasks of A.C.E.C. in our computer program, but we also provided opportunity for the participants to test their knowledge of many of the counselling skills identified with each task. Sample questions dealing with counselling skills are presented in Appendix B.

We received many favourable comments about the computer program from the British Columbia employment counsellors. Most of these comments dealt with the efficiency of covering a lot of material in a short period of time, the novelty of working at a terminal, and the reinforcers that were built in to make the program "fun to do".

During the last university semester, I adapted the employment-oriented A.C.E.C. model of goal-setting to counselling in general. This approach was used with beginning counselling students at the University of Manitoba in their first counselling practicum. Presently, I am re-writing parts of the computer program, so that we will have 10 short programs of approximately 5-10 minutes, each dealing with one of the A.C.E.C. tasks.

REFERENCES

- Conger, Stuart. (1983). The ten tasks of the assessment component of employment counselling (ACEC)--A goal-setting process. NATCON SERIES Vol. 3, Ottawa, Canada: Employment and Immigration Canada, Occupational and Career Analysis and Development Branch.
- Patsula, Philip. (1981). The assessment component of employment counselling. Ottawa, Canada: Employment and Immigration Canada, Occupational and Career Analysis and Development Branch.

APPENDIX A

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PRESS RETURN TO CONTINUE

WELCOME TO A REVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLOR TASKS

WHICH HOUR ARE YOU NOW TAKING?

- 1) THE FIRST HOUR
- 2) THE SECOND HOUR
- 3) THE LAST HOUR

TYPE IN 1, 2, OR 3.

PLEASE WAIT WHILE I GET THE PROGRAM IN

MEMORY. THANK YOU!

HELLO, AND WELCOME TO A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE TEN TASKS OF THE
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLOR AS OUTLINED IN THE ASSESSMENT COMPONENT
OF EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING.

MY NAME IS CAL, WOULD YOU MIND TYPING IN YOUR NAME?

= BILL

PRESS RETURN TO CONTINUE OK, BILL, BEFORE WE GO ON TO OUR
QUESTION DEALING WITH TASK SEQUENCES, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE A
LIST OF THE KEY WORDS FOR EACH TASK?

ENTER Y FOR YES TO SEE THE LIST OR N FOR NO AND WE'LL GO ON

= Y

- THE TEN TASKS OF THE A.C.E.C. -

1. RELATIONSHIP
2. CONCERN
3. CONSTRAINT
4. PURPOSE
5. CLARIFY CONSTRAINT
6. STRENGTHS & BARRIERS
7. ASSUMPTIONS
8. CONTINGENCY
9. CLARIFY CONTINGENCY
10. GOAL

PRESS RETURN TO CONTINUE, REARRANGE THE FOLLOWING TASKS INTO THEIR PROPER SEQUENCE AS SUGGESTED BY THE A.C.E.C. MANUAL:

- A. CONCERN
- B. RELATIONSHIP
- C. CONSTRAINT
- D. PURPOSE

TYPE YOUR ANSWER WITHOUT ANY SPACES OR PUNCTUATION IN BETWEEN

= BACD

GREAT STUFF BILL TRY ANOTHER

PRESS RETURN TO CONTINUE, O.K. BILL BEFORE WE GO ON WITH THE QUIZ, LET'S REVIEW THE TEXT

1. ATTENDING (MINIMAL ENCOURAGERS)
2. PARAPHRASING
3. REFLECTION OF FEELING

*** DON'T FORGET***

WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED READING, PLEASE PRESS RETURN TO CONTINUE COMMUNICATING TO CLIENT THAT YOU ARE PSYCHOLOGICALLY PRESENT AND INTERESTED.

THREE GENERAL COMPONENTS OF ATTENDING:

** ATTENDING **

- 1) ASSUME A RELAXED POSTURE
- 2) ESTABLISH COMFORTABLE EYE CONTACT
- 3) FOLLOW WHAT CLIENT IS SAYING

USE MINIMAL ENCOURAGERS

OH? SO? THEN? OR AND?

GO ON

SILENCE (WITH ATTENDING BEHAVIOUR)

EXAMPLE (MINIMAL ENCOURAGERS)

"I GOT SO MAD I JUST..."

"GO ON"

THE USE OF MINIMAL ENCOURAGEMENT HERE ENCOURAGES THE CLIENT TO CONTINUE TO TELL HIS STORY. ALTHOUGH THE CLIENT IS CONTROLLING THE DIRECTION OF THE INTERVIEW, HE IS FORCED TO ELABORATE AND TAKE AN INDEPTH LOOK AT HIS PROBLEM.

** PARAPHRASING **

STYLE OF ATTENDING IN WHICH YOU EITHER:

- A) REPEAT IN YOUR OWN WORDS THE MESSAGE GIVEN YOU BY CLIENT (DESCRIPTIVE)
- B) VERBALIZE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE CLIENT'S MESSAGE (CONFRONTING)

FIVE PURPOSES OF PARAPHRASING

- 1) LET CLIENTS HEAR WHAT THEY HAVE SAID
- 2) TO COMMUNICATE THAT YOU ARE ATTENDING
- 3) TO CLARIFY AND FOCUS
- 4) TO CHECK ACCURACY OF YOUR PERCEPTIONS
- 5) ENCOURAGES CLIENT TO CONTINUE

PARAPHRASING FOCUSES ON WHAT CLIENT IS SAYING/IDEAS AND THOUGHTS.

EXAMPLE:

"WHAT TIME IS IT?"

"YOU WANT TO KNOW THE TIME?"

THE RESPONSE SIMPLY REPEATS THE MESSAGE (DESCRIPTIVE).

"DO YOU HAVE TO LEAVE?"

HERE AN INTERPRETATION OF THE MESSAGE IF OFFERED (CONFRONTING).

**** REFLECTION OF FEELING ****

AN ATTEMPT TO EXPRESS IN FRESH WORDS FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS OF CLIENT TO:

1. CLARIFY VAGUELY EXPRESSED FEELINGS
2. HELP CLIENT TO 'OWN' FEELINGS
3. COMMUNICATE EMPATHY TO CLIENT

WHERE PARAPHRASING FOCUSES ON WHAT CLIENT IS SAYING, REFLECTION OF FEELING FOCUSES ON HOW CLIENT SAYS IT.

EXAMPLE (REFLECTION OF FEELING)

"WHEN I GO FOR AN INTERVIEW I GET SO NERVOUS AND I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHY"

"THIS REACTION PUZZLES AND CONCERNS YOU"

THE RESPONSE FOCUSES ON THE FEELINGS AND TENDS TO IGNORE THE COGNITIVE ASPECT OF THE MESSAGE. BY REFLECTING THE EMOTIONAL CONTENT OF THE COMMENTS IN A CLEAR FORM, THE CLIENT MAY BE BETTER ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THEM.

APPENDIX B

GOOD ANSWER BILL LET'S TRY ANOTHER

PRESS RETURN TO CONTINUE, READ THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE:

CLIENT "IT'S REALLY TOUGH WITH A WIFE AND KIDS AND NO PROSPECTS FOR A JOB"

COUNSELLOR "NO JOB AND A FAMILY TO CARE FOR PRESENTS PROBLEMS FOR YOU"

WHICH COUNSELLOR SKILL IS DEMONSTRATED

- A. PARAPHRASING
- B. REFLECTION OF FEELING
- C. MINIMAL ENCOURAGER

= A

GOOD WORK BILL TRY THIS ONE

PRESS RETURN TO CONTINUE, READ THE FOLLOWING CLIENT STATEMENT:

"I WAS LAID OFF LAST WEEK AFTER ALL THOSE YEARS WITH THE COMPANY"

WHICH RESPONSE WOULD SHOW THE BEST EXAMPLE OF PARAPHRASING?

- A. "WELL, SOMETIMES THOSE THINGS HAPPEN"
- B. "YOU FEEL THEY TREATED YOU UNFAIRLY BY NOT CONSIDERING ALL THE TIME YOU SPENT WORKING FOR THEM"
- C. "YOU PUT IN ALL THAT TIME AND THEY JUST LET YOU GO"

= C

GOOD EFFORT BILL, LET'S GO ON

PRESS RETURN TO CONTINUE, READ THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE:

CLIENT "I DON'T THINK I CAN TAKE MUCH MORE, I WONDER IF IT'S WORTH IT"

COUNSELLOR "YOU FEEL DEFEATED AND DON'T HAVE MUCH FIGHT LEFT"

WHICH COUNSELLOR SKILL IS DEMONSTRATED?

- A. MINIMAL ENCOURAGEMENT
- B. REFLECTION OF FEELING
- C. PARAPHRASING

= C

TOUGH LUCK BILL TRY IT AGAIN

PRESS RETURN TO CONTINUE, READ THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE:

CLIENT "I DON'T THINK I CAN TAKE MUCH MORE, I WONDER IF IT'S WORTH IT"

COUNSELLOR "YOU FEEL DEFEATED AND DON'T HAVE MUCH FIGHT LEFT"

WHICH COUNSELLOR SKILL IS DEMONSTRATED

- A. MINIMAL ENCOURAGEMENT
- B. REFLECTION OF FEELING
- C. PARAPHRASING

= B

GREAT STUFF BILL TRY ANOTHER

PRESS RETURN TO CONTINUE, READ THE FOLLOWING CLIENT STATEMENT:

"I THINK I GOT THE JOB, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN HANDLE IT"

WHICH RESPONSE WOULD SHOW THE MOST ACCURATE REFLECTION OF
FEELING

- A. "YOU'RE FEELING INADEQUATE"
- B. "YOU'RE HAPPY ABOUT THE JOB BUT YOU FEEL YOU WON'T LIKE
IT"
- C. "YOU'RE CONFIDENT ABOUT GETTING THE JOB BUT NOT SURE ABOUT
THE OUTCOME"

= A

SORRY BILL NOT QUITE, TRY AGAIN

PRESS RETURN TO CONTINUE, READ THE FOLLOWING CLIENT
STATEMENT: